

**OBITUARY:  
RICHARD K. ALLEN (1925-1992)**

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Richard Knapp "Dick" Allen, a leading mayfly systematist, died at his home in Lake San Marcos, California on 7 Aug 1992. He was born in Salt Lake City, Utah on 21 Apr 1925, to Knapp R. and Leora Allen. After serving in the U.S. Army in the Korean War, he obtained his B.S., M.S. and Ph.D. degrees at the University of Utah (M.S. in 1955, Ph.D. 1960). He then served a National Science Foundation supported post-doctoral during which a revision of the then very large mayfly genus *Ephemerella* (over 80 species) was completed for North America. His solution of the *Drunella grandis-spinifera* complex (then in *Ephemerella*) was a major accomplishment. He taught at the University of California Los Angeles in 1963, replacing the late Dr. John N. Belkin who was on leave. In 1964, he joined the faculty of California State University at Los Angeles where he taught a variety of courses, including marine invertebrate biology, from 1964 to 1976. He suffered at least 3 myocardial infarctions between 1973 and 1978 and underwent angioplasty to open up heart arteries. In 1976 he was operated on for colon cancer and as related by Dick, "while still recovering from anesthesia the physician sat at my bedside and told me to get my affairs in order as I had about six months to live." At this time he took a medical retirement from the University and was given intense chemotherapy treatments.

Even as an undergraduate, Dick was devoted to exercise and physical fitness, going to a gymnasium almost daily. Part of his recovery from heart circulatory problems and colon surgery included increasing long rides on his bicycle, until he rode 30 miles or more each day. The doctor's predictions were obviously a misjudgment; Dick lived 16 more years during which time he produced 23 papers. Although he suffered numerous other medical problems, he did not seek sympathy. Both of his hips were replaced as a consequence of an inherited hip socket deterioration disorder. In 1991 he had coronary bypass surgery to supply blood to his heart and lengthen his useful life. He died following a relatively short illness with untreatable pre leukemia (not a precursor of leukemia).

He published a well illustrated book, *Common Intertidal Invertebrates of Southern California*, that was a guide to marine invertebrates of Southern California, and 66 papers on the systematics and distribution patterns of mayflies, principally of the southwestern United States and Mexico. His research on mayflies was supported by a series of Systematic Biology NSF grants and later by his own funds.

He was sole author of 26 papers, and published the others with ten different co-authors. These include George Edmunds (Major Professor, Univ. Utah), and colleagues, Chad Murvosh (Univ. Nevada Las Vegas), W. L. Peters (Florida A&M



R. K. Allen (left) on his sailboat at Dana Point, California with C. M. Murvosh.

Univ.), Lewis Berner (Univ. of Florida), the late Selwyn Roback (Philadelphia Academy of Sciences) as well as his students at California State University Los Angeles, Richard Brusca, Janet I. Kilgore, Esther S. M. Chao, Sandra D. Cohen and D. L. Collins.

Dick Allen was a very social man and had a host of devoted friends. He was

an amiable and hard working field companion. At times, some colleagues became a target of his criticism although the cause was often trivial, perhaps a difference of taxonomic opinion or procedure. One of us (Edmunds) knew him throughout his career (although not closely since 1976) and the other (Murvosh) had a close relationship with him since 1978. We believe his occasional difficulties with colleagues related strongly to his many health problems. He was an opinionated man who worked hard and played hard, but he was normally a good and fun loving friend. His often brusque exterior kept many persons from knowing well his warmth, compassion, and generosity.

Dick traveled and collected widely in the United States and Mexico in a motor home, camping near streams or rivers. In Mexico where he traveled by himself or with Murvosh, he carried cans of dog food which he used to enlist a wandering "perro" as a watch dog. He gave the dog a can of food and a bowl of water at night and one in the morning and thus always had a barking sentry if anyone approached his motor home.

He married Mary Anne Ruzicka in 1951. They were subsequently divorced but remained good friends and were later remarried. Richard is survived by his widow, his daughter, Mrs. Jody Anne Varner (whom he honored with the name *Leptohyphes jodiannae*) and two granddaughters.

Most of his studies were concentrated on the mayfly families Tricorythidae in the Americas and Ephemerellidae on a world basis but he worked widely on other North and Central American species. He concentrated on the mayfly fauna of Mexico and the southwestern United States. He was the author or co-author of 151 species, 13 genera or subgenera, and 2 subtribes. The writers have prepared a bibliography of Dick's mayfly papers and an annotated list of the taxa he named. Copies are available on request to either author. A major concern during the last few days he was able to speak was that the specimens that he had borrowed were to be returned to the collections which owned them, and that his own specimens be given to the California Academy of Sciences in San Francisco. His wife and daughter delivered his remaining collections to Chad Murvosh at the University of Nevada Las Vegas. The authors will attempt to finish the job of distributing them but any curator who believes Dr. Allen's specimens included borrowed material under their care should contact one of the writers.

Dick Allen "retired" from studying mayflies several times but actually continued his studies throughout his life. Much of his collection, including the specimens collected in Mexico by Allen and Murvosh are already deposited at the California Academy of Sciences.